

Message Text

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62

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ARA-06 EUR-12 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 FEA-01

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PM-04 USIA-06 SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04

TRSE-00 IO-11 PA-01 PRS-01 /134 W

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R 221651Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7617

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OPEC, AG, AU, TC, FR

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SUBJECT: OPEC - OIL MINISTERS MEETING; TALK OF POSSIBLE

HEADQUARTERS MOVE

1. SUMMARY. VIENNA PRESS CARRIES ANOTHER REPORT ON POSSIBILITY OF OPEC HEADQUARTERS MOVE FROM VIENNA, STATES PARIS; ABU DHABI AND ALGIERS HAVE OFFERED THEMSELVES AS HEADQUARTERS SITES, AND DISCUSSES REASONS WHY AN ARAB CAPITAL WOULD NOT MEET WITH UNANIMOUS APPROVAL OF MEMBER COUNTRIES. NEWSPAPER POINTS TO INCREASING OPEC RESENTMENT THAT TERRORIST PENETRATION OF SECRETARIAT WAS ALLOWED TO HAPPEN. SECRETARIAT SPOKESMAN HAS CONFIRMED THAT DISCUSSION OF EVENTUAL HEADQUARTERS MOVE FROM VIENNA WILL BE ON AGENDA OF RESUMED OIL MINISTERS CONFERENCE BUT SAID THAT SECRETARIAT STILL HAS APPROVALS FROM ONLY FOUR OR FIVE MEMBERS TO HOLD MEETING IN ABU DHABI. END SUMMARY.

2. INFLUENTIAL VIENNA NEWSPAPER "DIE PRESSE" CARRIED ARTICLE ON JAN 22 ISSUE ENTITLED "RUMORS AGAIN ABOUT MOVING THE OPEC SEAT FROM VIENNA". ARTICLE STATES THAT UAE MINISTER AL-OTAIBA HAD ANNOUNCED TUESDAY THAT OPEC OIL MINISTERS WOULD DISCUSS A POSSIBLE SECRETARIAT MOVE AT THEIR FEBRUARY MEETING IN ABU DHABI (OPEC SPOKESMAN HAS CONFIRMED TO EMBOFF THAT SUCH QUESTION WILL BE AN AGENDA ITEM). "DIE PRESSE" FURTHER REPORTED THAT OFFERS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM ABU DHABI, PARIS, AND ALGIERS AS PERMANENT OPEC HEADQUARTERS. (OPEC SPOKESMAN TOLD EMBOFF THAT SECRETARIAT HAD NOT RECEIVED SUCH OFFERS BUT PERHAPS INDIVIDUAL MINISTERS HAD RECEIVED THEM.) THE NEWSPAPER STATED THAT NEWS OF A POSSIBLE MOVE TO AN ARAB COUNTRY HAVE BEEN RECEIVED WITH RESERVATIONS IN VIENNESE POLITICAL CIRCLES SINCE VARIOUS POLITICAL FACTORS SPEAK AGAINST IT. IT IS VERY QUESTIONABLE, PAPER SAYS, WHETHER NON-ARAB MEMBER STATES SUCH AS VENEZUELA, ECUADOR, INDONESIA, OR NIGERIA WOULD APPROVE A HEADQUARTERS MOVE TO AN ARAB COUNTRY SINCE OPEC WOULD RISK FINDING ITSELF SUCKED EVEN MORE INTO THE "ARAB UNDERTOW" AND HAVE IT APPEAR TO OUTSIDERS AS A PURELY ARAB INSTITUTION. "DIE PRESSE" ALSO POINTS OUT THAT AN OPEC MOVE TO THE UAE WOULD NOT BE WELCOMED BY THE RADICAL ARAB COUNTRIES WHO CONSIDER UAE "REACTIONARY". THE PAPER REPORTS THAT THIS IS INDICATED BY THE FACT THAT, ALONG WITH INDONESIA AND NIGERIA, LIBYA AND ALGERIA STILL HESITATE TO AGREE TO CONTINUE THE INTERRUPTED OIL MINISTERS CONFERENCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN ABU DHABI. ON THE OTHER HAND, POLITICAL SOURCES BELIEVE THAT THE MODERATE OIL PRODUCING STATES WOULD OPPOSE A HEADQUARTERS MOVE TO ALGIERS. THE NEWS STORY CLOSING BY STATING THAT ALTHOUGH THE AUSTRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS NOT BEEN INFORMED OF OIL MINISTERS' INTENTIONS TO TRANSFER THE HEADQUARTERS, SUCH A DECISION WOULD NOT BE EXPECTED WITHOUT A PERTINENT RESOLUTION OF THE MINISTERS. IT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED, PAPER SAYS, THAT THE MINISTERS WILL HOLD LONG

DISCUSSIONS ON AN EVENTUAL TRANSFER OF OPEC HEADQUARTERS.

3. IN FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL SAME EDITION, "DIE PRESSE" RECALLS THAT ALTHOUGH IN FIRST EXUBERANCE OVER THE "HAPPY" CONCLUSION OF THE OPEC HOSTAGE AFFAIR SEC GEN FEYIDE HAD ADDRESSED AN OUTRIGHT "DECLARATION OF LOVE" TO VIENNA (SEE VIENNA 0019), THE SHOCK OF THE TERRORIST ATTACK, INDEED ALSO THE DISPLEASURE OVER THE HUMILIATION THAT A FEW TERRORISTS COULD CAUSE THE MINISTERS AND THEIR GOVERNMENTS SAT DEEPER THAN FIRST APPEARED. RUMOR BECOMES EVER LOUDER THAT OPEC WILL MOVE ITS HEAD-QUARTERS FROM THE DANUBE, "DIE PRESSE" COMMENTS, AND ADDS THAT NO ONE COULD BE BLAMED FOR NOT WANTING TO RETURN TO THOSE ROOMS WHERE HE HAD TO LOOK DOWN THE BARREL OF A GUN AND FEAR FOR HIS LIFE.

4. OPEC SPOKESMAN TOLD EMBOFF TODAY (JAN 22) THAT SECRETARIAT STILL HAD RECEIVED APPROVALS FROM ONLY FOUR OR FIVE COUNTRIES FOR ABU DHABI MEETING. HE SAID SEC GEN FEYIDE WAS OUT OF COUNTRY, PROBABLY RETURNING TODAY AND SPOKESMAN THOUGHT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING RESUMPTION OF OIL MINISTERS MEETING COULD BE MADE LATER THIS WEEK BUT POSSIBLY NOT UNTIL NEXT WEEK.

5. COMMENT: CRITICISM IN OPEC CIRCLES OVER LACK OF ADEQUATE GOA SECURITY PRECAUTIONS BEFORE TERRORIST ATTACK DOES APPEAR TO BE INCREASING. POSSIBILITY OF HEADQUARTERS MOVE FROM VIENNA IS OF COURSE TROUBLING TO MANY OPEC STAFFERS SOME OF WHOM THINK IT COULD WELL HAPPEN. A VIENNA HOTELIER WHOSE HOTEL IS REGULARLY USED BY MANY VISITING OPEC DELEGATIONS TOLD EMBOFF RECENTLY HE REGARDED CHANCES OF OPEC MOVE FROM VIENNA AS FIFTY-FIFTY. DEPARTURE FROM VIENNA WOULD BE A BLOW TO AUSTRIA'S IMAGE AS A NEUTRAL MEETING GROUND AND GOA'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE VIENNA AS A CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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